



The Good Shepherd [Series](#)

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Summary: He is calling us by name.

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THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:1-18

On the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus offered those who will hear Him the gift of living water, also known as the Holy Spirit ([John 7:37-39](#)). Some time after this Jesus declared Himself to be the light of the world ([John 8:12](#)), and ratified this claim by healing a man born blind ([John 9:5-7](#)). Water and light were both well-known symbols of the Feast of Tabernacles ([Zechariah 14:6-8](#)).

The Pharisees excommunicated the (now healed) man born blind ([John 9:34](#)), and asked the sarcastic question, "Are we blind also?" ([John 9:40](#)). Jesus rebuked them for their spiritual blindness ([John 9:41](#)). In [John 10](#) He castigated them for their failures as the spiritual shepherds of Israel.

The image was familiar in a pastoral society, and echoed the Old Testament (e.g. [Jeremiah 23:1-4](#)). The teaching of Jesus is that He is the Good Shepherd who seeks out the lost sheep, and dies for His flock. This is in contrast to those who are not shepherds at all, but merely hired helps.

In every age of the Church there have been false shepherds, whose very entrance into the Ministry is suspect. The same are "thieves and robbers" who have entered the sheepfold by some way other than by the Lord's appointing ([John 10:1](#)). Jesus claims that His commission is from the Father ([John 10:18](#)), and as such He is the Shepherd of the sheep ([John 10:2](#)).

The Pharisees tended to look upon the lay folk as an uneducated rabble who deserved nothing but their scorn. The Lord looked upon them with a sympathetic eye as "sheep without a shepherd" ([Mark 6:34](#)). The picture of the LORD God "feeding His flock like a shepherd, and gathering the lambs" ([Isaiah 40:11](#)) is echoed in Jesus' practical compassion for the lost ([Matthew 18:12-14](#)).

Those who are the Lord's will most certainly hear His voice ([John 10:3](#)). He called Lazarus by name, and the dead man emerged from his tomb. Jesus identified Himself to Mary after His own resurrection simply by speaking her name.

The shepherd calls His own sheep by name, and He "leads them out" ([John 10:3](#)). Thus we can personally sing, "The Lord is my shepherd" ([Psalm 23:1](#)). He leads us beside the still waters, and into the paths of righteousness.

Those who hear the voice of Jesus will follow Him (**John 10:4**). This is the call at the beginning of John's Gospel (**John 1:43**), and at the end (**John 21:19**). Following Jesus is ongoing: "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

In the third significant "I am" saying of John's Gospel, Jesus proclaims Himself to be "the door of the sheep" (**John 10:7; John 10:9**). There is only one door to the sheepfold, only one way into the kingdom of God, only one way to get to heaven. Jesus is the only way!

Jesus brings life in all its abundance: a fullness of life just now, and eternal life beginning from now (**John 10:10**). In the fourth "I am" saying of John's Gospel, Jesus appears as the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep (**John 10:11**). Thus He is made known to His sheep (**John 10:14**).

This self-sacrifice of Jesus is rooted in His relationship with the Father (**John 10:15**). He was aware of the Father's love and approval as He prepared Himself for both death and resurrection (**John 10:17**). Soon Jesus would lay down His life, and take it up again, by His own power (**John 10:18**).

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